



SMALL TALKS
ON
BIG SUBJECTS



LADY RANDOLPH
CHURCHILL

20p.

EDITED BY
LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL
WOMEN'S WAR WORK

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2/10, from the Publishers*

**C. ARTHUR PEARSON, Ltd., 18 Henrietta Street,
LONDON, W.C.**

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BY

LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

London

C. Arthur Pearson Ltd.

1916

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Beginnings

OH, the difficulty of the first step !

Your castle in Spain has no foundation, that is why it is so easily built. Its crenellated towers and gilded cupolas, its moats and drawbridges, spring ready-made from your fertile brain. The parks and lovely pleasure-gardens are full-grown—no planning or planting, no waiting. You meander through pergolas of delicious, ever-ripe grapes. You lose yourself in olive and cypress groves, under whose shade your imagination runs riot, and where you compose immortal melodies or still more immortal verse. You rest by cool fountains under perpetual blue skies while a soft wind plays with your hair. You are young, handsome ; a gentle voice whispers, “Come, beloved !” Suddenly, Reality, in her work-a-day dress, stalks on the scene, and in a stern voice calls out “Time !” Alas for shattered dreams and vanished visions !

The artist stares at his blank canvas and then at his millionaire model, bejewelled and monstrous, and wonders in despair how he is to begin. The dramatist, pen in hand, a large expanse of virgin-white foolscap before him—his plot, his characters, his scenes all marshalled in grand array—hesitates for his opening phrase. The poet labours for his first word. The would-be *prima donna*, all smiles and furbelows, but with a sinking heart and tremulous voice, tries to steady her first note before the all-powerful *impresario* who is to be the arbiter of her fate.

First impressions, how much they mean ! How they remain in the hidden recesses of our memory—to return and sometimes haunt us with unwelcome clearness ! How much depends on the first trial of some great material work ! Take, for instance, the launching of a big battleship. For a year or more thousands of men have been working on it—for days and nights the great dockyard has been ringing with the sound of the hammer and the noise of machinery. The builder has spent many sleepless nights to be ready for this all-supreme moment—the

moment when in breathless silence the electric button is pressed which will release the dog-shores.

“Will she move?” is in every mind—a pause—then a ringing cheer—and amidst wild excitement the huge Dreadnought touches the water for the first time.

On the subject of Dreadnoughts, I once had a disturbing experience. Having had the honour of being asked to perform the christening ceremony of one of these ships, I inquired if I had to make a speech. “Nothing beyond naming the ship and wishing it ‘God speed,’ ” I was told. With a light heart I went off to Glasgow, where the launch was to take place. I beamed on the crowds at the docks, I accepted bouquets—I felt no anxiety—none of the carking care of an undelivered speech weighing on me—three words were all I had to say, and these were drowned by the crashing sound of the breaking of timbers and snapping of ropes as the mammoth vessel glided slowly down the slips.

“And now for luncheon,” said the Chairman.

"We've got a splendid crowd—at least five hundred, and they are all looking forward to your speech."

"My speech ! Heavens !" I cried ; " but I was assured before I left London that I should not have to speak. I hate speaking. I—"

"But I'm going to present you with a souvenir —a few words of thanks will perhaps be necessary."

"A lovely present," whispered my neighbour, "a Louis XVI gold chatelaine, I believe."

"And, as the mother of the First Lord of the Admiralty, they will expect a good speech from you—of course, you must know all about naval matters—surely, your son tells you everything ? No ? Well, you can always fall back on 'our cousins across the seas' for a topic."

Oh ! that miserable, untasted luncheon ! What should I say ? My mind was a blank, and the fatal moment was approaching. A brilliant thought struck me. I would draw a comparison between the delicate antique beauty of the old Louis XVI chatelaine which was

to be given me, and the modern, awe-inspiring, formidable iron monster I had just christened and launched. I was comforted—that would be a beginning, and for the rest I trusted to Providence.

I was on my feet, receiving with many smiles and grateful thanks a velvet box, which I proceeded to open for the expectant and admiring company to see—lo ! and behold, a very modern diamond brooch !

Alas ! for my opening remarks, where were they ? My dismay was so great that I burst into speech, and threw myself on their mercy—telling them my pitiful tale—and how I knew that on my way back to London I should suffer severely from *esprit d'escalier*, and think of all the glorious things I might have said, and did not. My audience were kind and sympathetic, and all ended well—but I shall never forget that speech and its beginning.

I remember when my son Winston was appointed to the Board of Trade—I am sure he must have felt very diffident at his first interview with the staff of this very important

department—a little over thirty, with his boyish, beardless face, he looked far younger than he really was, and must have made a great contrast to some of the permanent officials—men who had grown grey in the service of the State. He told me afterwards that he felt quite shy when one of the oldest—a white-haired man—while shaking hands with him, said : “ Mr. Churchill, I was at Eton with your father, and shall be proud to serve under his son.”

What a pleasant beginning, and how easy to work with people with such feelings !

After all, concentration—a little grit, the determination to put your shoulder to it—and in most things in life it is but *le premier pas qui coûte*.

The Awakening

WHAT wonderful and awe-inspiring times we have lived in the past year ! We might have been pottering out our little humdrum lives, eating our chickens and going through our daily routine in comfort and smug complacency instead of being called upon to witness, and for many of us, to take an active part in, the greatest war that has ever been since the world began. To follow day by day, hour by hour, step by step, the biggest page ever to be written in history is a privilege, even if for most of us it is full of anxiety and apprehension.

In England our awakening has been slow, but it has come, and we are busy readjusting our ideas and our lives knowing that things can never be quite the same again. To be calm, courageous, and capable is what we are all

striving after, no mean task to set to oneself. As a compatriot remarked at the outbreak of the war, "Let foemen beware of a nation whose women do not wail and whose men do not cheer at the call to arms." There is less talk and more business done in one day over this war than in the whole of the South African Campaign. But there is no doubt that the fate which most women in England have to endure is a hard one to face at this moment. To be passive and remain at home doing quietly day by day work, which if strenuous is often uninteresting, is uninspiring compared with the lot of those who have had the luck to get into the active zone.

What war means to men strikes home with full force to women after a visit to the American Women's War Hospital at Paignton, South Devon. This beautiful building, full of light and space, so dazzled some of the soldier inmates that they declared they must be in a "Cinema Palace!"

"But, please, Sister, let us sleep," is their one cry. And sleep they do, some of them for

eighteen hours at a stretch. Marvellous tales they have to relate, and all of them are full of ardour to get well, to return to the Front and "get at them" again.

The English "Tommy" is a simple child, cheerful and gay in the most adverse circumstances. A man shot through the face will smile crookedly and wink his one eye while he tells you that he "got as many of them as they got of me," or, turning painfully in his cot, he will put out a trembling hand to get out of his locker to show you the treasured piece of shrapnel, perhaps two inches square, which was taken out of his back. As they get better the liveliest tunes on the gramophone are what they love, and they do not mind even hearing five at once, all playing different airs !

"A switch off from the screech of the shells," as they graphically put it.

The arrival of these poor wounded fellows who have been shunted about in slow trains for a week through France, and have not had their clothes off sometimes for weeks, comes as a revelation to the inhabitants of the sleepy

Devonshire coast. The first ambulance train from Southampton with its convoy of wounded for the Hospital woke up the incredulous civilians. Torquay, Torbay, and Paignton turned out to a man.

"Then there really is a war going on?—it's not all newspaper talk—here is undoubted evidence of it."

But in country districts, after all, it is difficult to understand the true state of affairs. The peaceful fields still smile, the cattle browse, the birds sing, and the sun shines. How ironical! In three hours in an aeroplane they could have been over the firing-lines! . . . And that reminds me that only the other day the trenches of the opposing forces were so close that the men could hear one another singing patriotic songs, with the result that the English soldier varied his musical selections with the "Wacht am Rhein," and the Teuton tried his guttural accent on "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary," finally in a lull resorting to forcible language to one another in their own particular vernacular.

In comparison with the devastation of Belgium and France, and all the horrors attending a bloodthirsty war, England feels but little, and is only in the backwater of the turmoil. Pessimists have said for years that “England was on the decline.” They will have to alter their opinion now. Never has she been so calm, so efficient. Not being really a military nation, she has raised a large army, is training as many more, and this in a quiet masterly manner. No “Mafficking” over victories or despondency over reverses. England has set herself a task that nothing on earth will turn her from, and, although Englishmen refuse to fight but as gentlemen, the awakening as regards her efficiency has been an unpleasant one to an enemy who, discarding all the accepted civilised methods of warfare, shoots under the protection of the Red Cross and the White Flag, and who, afraid to come out in an equal duel on the high seas, resorts to treacherous submarine warfare and lays mines to the danger of the world at large.

The English Girl of To-day

DISCUSSING a girl friend who was embarking on her second season, one of a group of young people gathered round a tea-table declared that she was much nicer than when she first came out, and wondered why.

"I'll tell you," said the most up-to-date of them. "It is not the girl who has improved but her mother. She has given up her old-fangled ideas and wheeled into line."

This is the attitude of the present day—it is not the girl who has to be "wheeled into line," but the mother. Independence is the cry of the moment—emancipation all round and for everyone, and like every movement in England it at once becomes exaggerated. The girl of to-day in whatever class of society

is not content to emulate her American cousin, she wants to go "one better"—as she herself would say.

There is no doubt, however, that the majority of girls are benefited by being independent and thinking for themselves, instead of being treated (as they are in the richer classes) like spoilt inconsequent children—to be snubbed and sat upon in their early youth, and later only to be dressed up and exhibited in the marriage market, often regardless of their inclinations or suitability, and in the poorer classes their independence curtailed entirely by the grind of poverty which forces them to live at home, slaves to work and often to harsh parents.

The evil of too much independence is perhaps greater on the surface than in reality, and is certainly outweighed by its benefits; the strengthening and developing of character, the self-reliance, the degree of unselfishness which comes to the girl untrammelled by the old narrow conception of what was correct and proper, give her a chance of fitting herself to become—what is the natural aim and object

of every healthy and well-balanced woman—a wife and mother.

On the other hand, too much freedom is undeniably bad for some types of girl, but I am thinking more of the principle than of the application. In all countries there will always be parents who bring up their girls on the “Never-leave-them-out-of-my-sight” policy, but in doing so forget that unless they themselves have had a wide experience and know how to impart it, the girl is not likely to be well equipped when she has to play her part in the battle of life. Parents are prone to imagine that ignorance is innocence.

I remember hearing a friend of mine—a most worthy mother—declare with pride that her daughters were only allowed to read such books as she herself had read, and as she had neither the time nor the inclination to “waste” on books, the books were naturally few and far between.

The English girl to-day, who was beginning to indulge in social independence, had more than often an utterly mistaken idea of how to make the best of it, and in her desire to show

how free she was, she adopted a boldness, self-assertiveness, and absence of manners which were apt to mislead, and which placed her in an entirely false light. It is curious how little this independence was conducive to matrimony. At the end of a long and strenuous London season, if there were half a dozen engagements, it was looked upon as quite a rich harvest. The familiarity and hail-fellow-well-met manner which are becoming so universal between young people do not engender either sentiment or desire. The great ascendancy of sport, in which both sexes join, has undoubtedly something to do with this, for though a man may be a man, perhaps for this very reason he is not inclined to feel very tenderly towards a girl who has just beaten him severely on his own ground at lawn-tennis or golf.

Physical activity can be carried too far. It has been said of the modern English girl that she is developing an extraordinary restlessness, and must be perpetually on the move. She thinks more of games than of anything else—golf, tennis, motoring, dancing are her absorb-

ing occupations. The arts in any form bore her—reading is dull work—music is confined to the pianola and her repertory to ragtime songs and dances. If the timid and long-suffering mothers remonstrate or faintly suggest a more intellectual life, they are told not to be so “Early Victorian”—a reproach which is meant to be crushing.

But it is a far cry from the affectations and niggling occupations of the simpering bread-and-butter misses of that period to the athletic girls of to-day, who seem to live, as someone said, only to swing their arms and point their toes, rushing about in the pursuit of pleasure like an eddy of purposeless dust.

The habit of comparing this generation with the last and bemoaning the change is futile and a mistake, for we live in such different conditions that, naturally, not only our mode of life but our outlook must be different. The ease of locomotion and the pace multiply our occupations and amusements. We can crowd into one day the work and pleasure of several days of twenty-five years ago.

Then the keynote of an English Society woman's life was interest in the questions of the day and sport. It might have been said before the war that it was degenerating into sport and dress. American example having taught the Englishwoman how to make the most of herself, in the realm of dress she is holding her own—though perhaps to the jeopardising of her purse or her parents' purse.

Excitement was the order of the day, and it permeated all classes. The middle-class girl had but one idea, to emancipate herself from the thraldom of her dull home. She, too, wanted her fling, but when she got her freedom she often found bachelordom very dull without a bachelor boy to play with.

On the other hand, there are girls who have high ideals and look upon work as a serious thing. These are thoroughly competent to compete with men and economically to take their part in the world's progress and work. They train themselves and specialise in all sorts of subjects, and on a great many can speak with authority. These are the women who, if

any, should share in man's political responsibilities.

But how changed is the outlook, and what a wonderful effect the war has had on the English girl of to-day. That very independence which she was seeking, and which some have achieved, is standing her in good stead. Self-reliant, ready to make any sacrifice, she is doing splendid work in hospitals and in economic work of all kinds. Nothing comes amiss, from scrubbing floors to making ammunition. All the best qualities in woman have come to the fore in these strenuous times ; they have been called upon and not found wanting, and the Prime Minister's latest appeal is sure to be answered by thousands. Rich or poor, there is hardly a girl in England who is not to-day contributing in some way her iota to the great needs of the war. If there are any brainless young women and girls whose sole idea of the war is to be seen in the company of those in khaki—they are swamped in the overwhelming majority of the capable and purposeful.

It is inconceivable that we can ever go back

to the old order of things. When Peace once more reigns, the modern English girl of whatever class will have so profited by having found a natural outlet for her energy and abilities, that having conquered her independence, she will be able to live the well-balanced life which alone can give satisfaction to soul and body.

Friendships

“TREAT your friends as you do your pictures, and place them in their best light.”

I was once quoting this to someone who exclaimed: “What, hang them? Well, I believe that, metaphorically, half of us do, and if the other half does not, it is because the friends would make too sorry a picture gallery.” While laughing at his jest, we fell to discussing the truth and wisdom of the saying.

How prone we are to judge our friends by the knowledge we have of ourselves, and expect to find in them the faults and qualities we possess or think we do. On the principle that “it takes a thief to catch a thief,” we recognise in others our own familiar traits. The man who, in an animated discussion, cried out, “I wish I could believe you, but you forget that I, too, am a liar,” illustrates the argument.

"Save me from my friends" has been the cry from time immemorial. We have all suffered from them. It may be from their want of thought, not want of heart, but the result is the same.

Of all species, the candid friend is perhaps the worst; the one who asks with solicitude after your health: "Are you quite well? You are looking *so* yellow, dearest, I feared you might be sickening for something." Or the one who, under the guise of friendship, repeats adverse criticisms: "Indeed, I am always fighting your battles. Of course, you know it is only that, being such a great friend of yours, I think it my duty to tell you what people say. You understand, darling, don't you?"

Then there is another variety, the inherited friend, the friend of the family, often unsympathetic and a prosy old bore, who, on the strength of having known you since you were born, thinks he has inherited the arm-chair by your fireside, and considers himself privileged to "put you right" on every occasion.

But are these friends? How the title is mis-

used ! The chance acquaintance of a few weeks, or one whom you may have known as many years, are equally dubbed friends, and probably neither of them deserve the name.

Can you choose a friend ? I doubt it, for does not the ideal friendship contain the elements of platonic love, its delicacy of sentiment and unselfish devotion, without the strenuous emotions and often cruelty of the stronger passion ? This feeling surely cannot be sought, but must come naturally, and that is why friendships which last for years are sometimes made in a few days, so strong is the intuition and mutual understanding.

Is it not possible to have different types of friends ? Why should we expect to find in each the same qualities and virtues ? It is true, and, alas ! unfortunate, that the most dependable and friendworthy are not always the pleasantest and most agreeable companions.

A clever writer has defined three classes of men who should be eliminated from friendship —the cold, the shallow, the crude, and he defines the crude as “one whose emotions are

few and elementary." I do not agree with him in respect to that kind of character, for if at times, without meaning to, he steps heavily on some of your most cherished ideals, or ruthlessly, without understanding, unmasks your secret aspirations, only to deride them, you do not forget that he is not merely *l'ami des beaux jours*. On the darkest and stormiest day his strong and ready arm will be there if needed. He is a rock to be leant on. Poor, indeed, is he who has not in his life come across such a friend, and who, having found him, has not "grappled him to his soul with hooks of steel."

On the other hand, how perfect is the companionship of the comrade who combines these sterling qualities with the warm and glowing feelings which produce emotional sentiments, and in whose society you give of your best.

I had such a friend once. It was impossible to know her and not love her. She was so human, so sympathetic, and her brilliant and delicious mind so deep a well to draw from.

I remember a day we spent together in the country. We went for a walk. It was one of

those days the English climate never wearies of giving—grey, raw, damp, odious. But we became so interested in our talk that it was some time before we noticed that we had wandered into a ploughed field. To me it seemed, listening to her, that the field was enamelled with flowers, and that a warm sun beamed on us. She had the rare faculty of making you feel at peace with yourself, and inspiring you with unfailing hope. Her own life lacked much of the brightness she gave others, but she was happy in her work and overflowing interests, and notwithstanding her rather frail physique, her enthusiasm made her a true optimist. The world knew her as John Oliver Hobbes, but those who had the privilege of a more intimate relationship will cherish the name of Pearl Craigie among the jewels of friendship.

We may outlive and sometimes outgrow our friends, but if those we have are to be placed in their proper light, we must study them to their advantage. You can afford to sky your vivid and highly-coloured Rubens and place him in

a strong light, whereas the small and delicate Van Eyck, a mass of wonderful detail and subtle charm, can only be seen near to and hung low on the line to be appreciated. As we treat our most treasured pictures, so must we treat our friends, for, when they are worthy of it, do they not both bring intense pleasure and light to our lives ?

Who, having tasted and quenched his thirst at the sacred spring of Friendship, dares speak of life as anything but joyous and desirable ?

Suffragist Strategy

THE leaders of the Suffragist Movement are in this war proving themselves great strategists as regards their cause, and are playing a game which must ultimately lead to victory. When I say "playing a game," I do not wish to detract in any way from their patriotism, which I am sure is staunch and real; but I do not see why from their point of view it should not be "one for the country and two for ourselves."

Could they, however, have foreseen the war, how much might they not have spared themselves and others, for in taking up the attitude they have now adopted they have gained more adherents in a few months and more sympathy than in all their years of fierce agitation. That is at least my opinion as a "neutral," although a prominent suffragette told me she thought

their militant methods had paved the way, besides giving them the experience needed to enable them to organise as they are doing now.

On July 17th last, fifty thousand women walked through the streets of London to demand "war work" from the newly appointed Minister of Munitions. In the procession fluttered banners bearing such inscriptions as "Men must fight and Women must work," "Shells made by a wife may save a husband's life," "Women are prepared to pay any price to defeat the enemy."

The leaders of the procession were received by Mr. Lloyd George and Mrs. Pankhurst, and they appeared side by side on a platform which had been erected for the purpose.

The puzzled spectator might well have rubbed his eyes that day and wondered if he were the victim of an hallucination. In the piping times of peace he had seen similar processions of women, but by a curious paradox those were warlike and organised in a spirit of antagonism to the ruling powers; whereas this one, taking place in war time, was peaceful and the motive

a desire to help the Government, not to fight it. The puzzled spectator must also have observed with astonishment that the crowd which watched the procession was entirely sympathetic. The “Pankhurst lot” received cheers instead of jeers . . . and when he understood that the notorious Mrs. Pankhurst was being received with honour by the very Minister who had to call in the aid of Scotland Yard to keep her away from him, he must have gasped for breath !

The events of that memorable day in July contain the key to the present position of the suffragists. With a laudable patriotism, none the less laudable because, as I have said before, it owes as much to the head as to the heart, the leaders of the Suffragist agitation, and in particular the fiercely militant section, called a truce when the war broke out, and the battle cry of “Votes for Women” was no longer heard.

Yet it would be a mistake to assume from this that the Suffragist question is dead. On the contrary, it was never more alive in its moral aspect, and it has always been stronger

as a moral question than as a political one. But the most powerful and militant of all the Suffragist societies, the "Women's Social and Political Union," never made a more sound political move, apart from all else, than when it proclaimed its patriotism. It may have been an attempt to justify militancy, and it would have been inappropriate and illogical for those who had engaged in war of a kind to get the vote, not to support their country against a foreign foe. Then there was also the motive of wishing to show that women without votes could think "imperially" and subordinate their interests to that of the State.

The most influential of the constitutional Suffragist societies, the "National Union," of which Mrs. Fawcett is the leader, has taken the same line as regards the desire to show the fitness of women for citizenship. This society has given its vast organisation to assist unemployment, and to carry on many kinds of relief and constructive work for which the war has created a demand.

I believe that some of the minor Suffragist

organisations are still continuing their peaceful propaganda. They still hold meetings and talk of the vote, not of the war. Whatever we may think of the wisdom of the pacifist women, they certainly proved in respect to the International Peace Conference the folly of the argument that the woman's vote, if it existed in England, would be a solid vote. The same differences of opinion which divide a male electorate would divide a female electorate.

It is rather a curious fact that in England, where the agitation for women's political enfranchisement is so much more widespread than on the Continent, the women have not yet been called upon to do as much in war time as they have both in France and Germany. But that is not their fault ; they are ready to do anything, from becoming food inspectors to deal with camp waste to fighting—and where they are employed have more than proved their efficiency. In an eloquent sermon against " slackers " a clergyman recently said that if the women of England were called out, the necessary three millions would have responded the next day.

The courage of women in war time is a revelation of Spartan virtues. In the procession last July the handsome young woman who represented Belgium walked barefooted with her tattered banner, and at the end of the long march people in the street were kissing her hands and trying to wipe the blood from her bleeding and torn feet.

A friend of mine, Miss Eleanor Warrender, who accompanied me to South Africa during the Boer War, has been working since the outbreak of this terrible war in French hospitals at the Front. Shelled at Furnes and Dunkirk, sleeping all night in cellars full of rats—which to most women would be worse than shells!—she continued her work until the hospitals themselves became untenable.

I am glad to say she has been recommended for the highest military order in the French Army, and I have no doubt the gallant French General who give her the “accolade” did so with all the more fervour, she being an English “Mees.”

To sum up, the position seems to be this :

Direct agitation for the vote has been abandoned by the majority of the Suffragists for motives both interested and disinterested. By refusing to hamper and embarrass their country while it is engaged in a struggle for life with a powerful foreign foe, they have undoubtedly taken a grand opportunity of showing at once their patriotism and their fitness for political responsibility.

The Government, on the other side, by showing their willingness to let women replace men in occupations depleted by military service have destroyed one of the arguments against admitting women to the electorate. Also, by placing women on the National Register, they have tacitly admitted that women have a stake in the country and an obligation to same. So we have the paradoxical position that while votes for women are not talked about, votes for women have entered the sphere of practical politics.

On that famous July 17th, Mr. Lloyd George was asked, "What about women's votes?" He replied, "We will get her into a shell factory

first." But we all know what happened to the devil when his health improved ! And possibly when the war is over what appears now to be inevitable may suddenly appear not at all inevitable.

What Does Success Owe to Failure?

WHAT does success owe to failure ? The writer propounded this question to a celebrated artist friend.

“*Of course*, success owes everything to failure,” he answered. “I am built up on the failures of others ! If their paintings were not so bad, mine would not be thought so good.” He was candid at any rate.

On the other hand, another friend of mine, a racing man this time, attributed all the disasters of his life to the fact of having had, at his first venture, the luck to buy a horse that won everything—swept the board ; and his owner, thinking he could at any time buy more winners of the same type, became too confident and was ultimately ruined.

Of course, it may be contended that if a scheme or an idea is a good one it cannot spell failure, no matter what vicissitudes one may have to go through in launching it, and if it triumphs in the end the reward is usually justified. In mechanics, a field in which such marvellous progress has been made during recent years, it is obvious that success is built up on the experimental failure of others. H. G. Wells' *War in the Air*, for example, was classed at first with Jules Verne's improbable stories.

Yet both these authors can be looked upon to-day as prophets, and their ingenious forecasts have been brought within the range of practical usefulness, for none of their most fantastic tales can compete with the brilliant and daring exploits of our aviators during this war, feats which are now an actual reality.

The other day I had the privilege of hearing from an eye-witness of an air-duel between a German Taube and one of our English aeroplanes. Like two birds of prey they swooped

up and down at each other at impossible angles in a storm of bursting shrapnel, which looked in the twilight like the small, sharply defined pink clouds one so often sees in the pictures of the Early Italian masters. Then both eventually disappeared over the horizon.

How often what seems at first sight to make for dazzling success has proved at the end of the chapter to be quite the reverse. Take the present war. No nation in the world's history has ever made such an onleap to great and national prosperity as Germany in the past twenty-five years, and the result is apparently to be—not failure—but destruction.

The forty years of warlike preparation, of "Kultur," of attempted social education has resulted in dire failure. Their hordes of goose-stepping men, armed with every engine of war that man, money, and the devil can invent, have been kept in check by a thin line of Allies hundreds of miles long.

The fact is that this enemy of mankind has gone on the principle that two and two make four, a theory workable on paper, but not

in reality—or in war. Like the murderer who cleverly effaces all traces of his crime, and, thinking every possible contingency provided against, forgets some clue which breaks the whole chain, so Germany forgot the King of the Belgians—and the unlimited resources of England. The Kaiser thought of England only as he found her at the beginning of the war, not as she is in the making, or what she will become before the war is over.

Madame de Staël said that “The thought that cools and steadies other nations inflames the German.” No better testimony of this wise saying could be found than in Germany’s present attitude of mind all round. The Germans have been blinded by fatuous self-confidence and contempt of their enemy, and their miscalculation in not seeing things as they are, but as they wish them to be, is preparing for them a gigantic failure—built on all the elements of success.

But where are the permanent elements of success for a nation which indulges in futile lying, even to its own people? What about

Mons, placarded as it was in the early weeks of the war with the “ fact ” (?) that the German army had evacuated Paris on account of the cholera !

It was said of Talleyrand that he never lied, but always deceived, and of Metternich that he always lied, but never deceived. Which method applies to the Germans ?

To be drunk with too great a sense of one’s own power must ever end in irretrievable disaster, alike for nations and individuals. Yet as one turns to the other side of the picture one wonders : Is it historically true to say that the world’s greatest successes are founded on failure ?

We know that often the pioneers of successful movements experience at the outset dismal set-backs, which only the belief in a righteous cause or absolute confidence in oneself eventually overcomes. Disraeli’s first speech in the House of Commons was a pitiful failure, but his famous retort “ I sit down now, but the time will come when you will hear me ” was a proof that he had in him the elements of success. His failure

on that occasion only delayed the period of his success by making him for the time being ridiculous.

After all, as love is akin to hate, so perhaps success is akin to failure.

Mars and Cupid

OUR young friend Cupid has his hands full just now. The old adage, “Marry in haste and repent at leisure,” might be translated “Marry in war and repent in peace.” Everyone has been struck by the remarkable influence which the war has had on the marriage rate—in England, at all events.

Notwithstanding the war, or perhaps on account of it, “Business as usual” has been advocated in most things, and although I am not aware that Hymen has been specially circularised, it is a fact that trade with him has been unusually brisk.

In London alone, since the outbreak of the war, about four times the normal number of marriage licences have been issued, and a large percentage of special licences which in ordinary times are seldom applied for or granted

—all of the applicants being naval or military officers, who, in their warlike ardour, would seem to agree with Stevenson that “Marriage is a field of battle, and not a bed of roses.”

To what can we attribute this increase in weddings—war weddings, as they are called? Mars and Cupid—what is the connection between the two gods? When Mars strides through the world, does that determined little aviator Cupid always circle round his armed head, and in the flight does he always triumph? Perhaps it is not for nothing that in mythological pictures Cupid is always represented as triumphing over Mars.

It is a psychological fact that a man who is going to risk his life has a natural desire to leave someone behind either to mourn him or to carry on his name. Then, when we turn to the feminine side of the question, we ought not to forget the part played by that khaki uniform, and all that it symbolises to the woman. How striking is the transformation of the man seemingly without grit, and with apparently no purpose in life. Only yesterday, with

rounded shoulders, he was trying to shuffle himself into her good graces. To-day he gets his marching orders, and at once becomes a hero in her eyes.

It is also true that the worth of people who are dear to us is never realised more than when we are in danger of losing them. Often an unsuspected feeling springs into love at the approach of separation.

“ And often in this parting hour
Victorious Love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain ;
And flinty is her heart, can view
To battle march a lover true,
Can hear perchance his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.”

Another point—an economic one this time—bringing the matter from the realm of fancy to the reality of the altar ! The modern Cupid is a business-like imp. We must not think that his activity recently has been entirely romantic. Without wishing to emphasise the sordid—or shall we say the practical—side of the question, there is no doubt that among the poorer classes

the knowledge that the girl he leaves behind him is well looked after must weigh with the soldier. If death, perchance, awaits him, a pension awaits her. He knows that this war is not a picnic, it may last months—years—the girl of his choice may change—now is the moment ! Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but it is best to secure it, and not tempt Providence.

And what of the woman's point of view ? If her man should be killed, is it not better to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all ? As a young widow, is her position not more assured than that of the girl who has lost her betrothed ? And, besides gaining her independence—even if at a desperate price—with her pension is she not better off financially ?

They say marriages are made in Heaven ; and the nearest approach that I know to the truth of this saying is the case of an aviator friend of mine, who between two flights secured his bride. With only a few hours to spare, he flew over from Dunkirk the

other day, married the lady, and then flew back again !

Carping critics are condemning these hasty war marriages as indiscreet and improvident. But surely the glorious spirit called forth by these stirring times, of which such unions are the result, must be of value. For certainly the best in both sexes is paramount, and must leave its mark for the better on the future generations. Let us hope that England will profit by having a sturdier and more valiant race than heretofore.

Yes, Cupid is indeed occupied, not to say ubiquitous, in the present crisis of the nation's history. Not content with precipitating matters between the irresolute and bringing the wayward to book, he must needs turn his attention to the older married couples—those Darbys and Joans who in their staid habits had settled down to a comfortable, unromantic toleration of each other which bordered on the indifferent.

What happens ? The husband is ordered to rejoin his old regiment, and suddenly all is changed. In the box containing the khaki

uniform, ordered in haste, in which he is going to encase himself, sly Master Cupid lies hidden, and soon he launches one of his arrows full at our Joan, who feels an unwonted glow about her heart as she watches her husband don the becoming cap, which he shares, as regards shape, with a Field Marshal !

“ How well it sits on his grey head ! ” she thinks. “ What a martial air he has, and how young he looks with his straightened back and squared shoulders ! ”

“ I had forgotten you were a soldier ! ” she exclaims.

“ Then you have forgotten our honeymoon,” he says reproachfully.

“ How can you say such a thing ? ” she retorts. “ Don’t you remember how I had to wheedle your colonel to extend your leave ? ”

And so they fall to reminiscing, while Cupid, rejoicing, laughs in his sleeve. And well he may—for the havoc he is playing in these old hearts, not to mention the young ones.

How akin Love is to Pity has been amply illustrated by the number of invalided soldiers

back from the Front who have come and seen and conquered their brides in a few days. Love laughs at locksmiths ; this year he laughs at war.

But it was a heartless cynic who, commenting on a newspaper correspondence on "Marriage and War," said he did not know that there was much difference.

On Letter-Writing

WHO has the time or the inclination nowadays to write letters for the sake of writing ? The hurry of the present age, the telegraph, the telephone, the threatened wireless in your own pocket, annihilate space and time.

The stilted sentimental writers of the early eighteenth century would find few votaries, since most people can hardly find time for even the telegraphic style most of them adopt.

When Mary Wollstonecraft, writing to Gilbert Imlay from Paris (1793), says : "I have not left the hue of love out of the picture—the rosy glow ; and fancy has spread it over my own cheeks, I believe, for I feel them burning, whilst a delicious tear trembles in my eye that would be all your own if a grateful emotion directed to the Father of Nature, who has made me thus alive to happiness, did not give more warmth to the sentiment it divides," she adds : "I must pause a moment"—I think so, too !

Perhaps this studied effusion did not give as much pleasure to its recipient as did the one laconic word “**DAILY**” sent every morning by a love-sick swain who was no scribe to his inamorata, “**DAILY**” meaning “Darling Anne, I love you.” Probably that was all she really wanted to know, and all he wanted to say.

The wife who writes to her husband : “I write as I have nothing to do, and I cease as I have nothing to say,” likewise adopted a style free from unnecessary verbiage !

In the old days marriages by proxy were frequent occurrences, but love-letters by proxy can have dangerous consequences. I remember a girl friend of my youth who was persuaded to become engaged to a diplomat considerably older than herself. The girl, young and beautiful, but of a reticent nature which her enemies called stupidity, was not gifted with a ready pen, and the fact of having to answer his letters caused her much perturbation ; at last, in desperation, she invoked the aid of a friend, who, nothing loth, amused herself writing the most impassioned love-letters for her.

These, although they encouraged and delighted her *fiancé*, were so inconsistent with her cold and indifferent manner, that he could not reconcile them, and eventually suspected the truth, with the result that, much to the indignation of the parents, the engagement was broken off—to the content and unbridled laughter of the two conspirators.

There is no doubt that with the advent of the daily Press brought in with your breakfast, which gives you the news of the world, not to mention the tittle-tattle of Society, topics for gossipy letters became singularly curtailed. Possibly the historian or Samuel Pepys of the future will have to go to the Press for his descriptions of the events he wishes to chronicle or for supplements of his “hearsays.”

In England the records of Parliamentary debates, which touch on every subject, furnish sufficient material to satisfy the most inquisitive mind, for there are few things, big or little, that are not discussed in the House of Commons.

The same feeling which prompts us to write a longer letter to a distant friend than to one

nearer home, animated most letter-writers in days gone by. The time a letter took to arrive at its destination, the expense, and, above all, the amount people had to say, made them often, if not always, discursive and very long-winded ; nor is it to be wondered at when one reflects that in those days most people, owing to the difficulties, not to say dangers, of travelling, remained at home for months at a time, and a letter received or sent was generally an event of great importance to the whole household.

Of course, there was plenty of time to polish and repolish, and eventually to send off a highly-finished and thought-out epistolary document, much in the nature of a diary, recording the most minute actions of the writer's daily life, and his opinions and feelings on every subject he could think of.

But what a thrilling tale might be unfolded, could one reconstitute and follow from start to finish the adventures of a letter containing important matter, written, let us say, in the sixteenth century—the number of horses employed, the stirring incidents on the way, the

hairbreadth escapes of the trusty messenger, who often lost his life in defending the precious script in his doublet, and which eventually reached its goal entrusted to other hands.

As long as the human race lasts people will put pen to paper indiscreetly and damn themselves accordingly. The letter written in "frantic haste" and thrust into the wrong envelope is a fruitful source of trouble. A story is told of the Duchess of ——, who some years ago invited a friend to dinner to have the honour of meeting the late Duchess of Teck. "Do help me to entertain fat Mary," she wrote, and by mistake addressed the letter to Her Royal Highness, who, being amiable, apart from having a keen sense of humour, replied : "Fat Mary will be delighted to be entertained."

Perhaps such a mistake could not have happened in the days when letters took the form of long folded parchments, the sealing of which was a matter of care and patience. How different is the business-like appearance of the modern letter, the thick white paper with its abbreviated telegraphic address and telephone

number, not to mention railway station and postal town.

The delicately tinted pink and mauve paper with gilt edges, the monograms and ciphers so dear to the heart of the Early Victorian *élégante* have disappeared, and with them the monogram album. Instead we have the Kodak and the visitors' book, with which every girl arms herself for a country-house visit, and if the party is large you may be called upon to sign your name twenty times or more. These visitors' books are often melancholy records of the march of inexorable Time, and even the marking of a little red cross opposite the name of a departed friend only "gives a melancholy satisfaction," as a cynical host expressed himself.

But to return to our subject of letter-writing. There are naturally all kinds of letters, but the most entertaining are undoubtedly the indiscreet ones, the writer of which is neither thinking of posterity nor afraid that his effusion will be seen by other eyes than those for which it is intended, nor does he attempt argument or eloquence, the grave of "abandon," so necessary for a light and graphic pen.

Love letters belong to a different category, and are only, as someone said, records of love-making.

The tell-tale “scrap of paper,” besides being the boon of the playwright and the novelist, has in all times figured largely in history. How largely has never been more emphasised than during this war, when owing to the destruction of the famous “Scrap of Paper” which should have been the safeguard of a neutral country, a kingdom was devastated and an Empire disgraced.

The war is a great factor at this moment, and it has undoubtedly stimulated a revival of letter-writing which has added a new and exciting interest to our mail bag. But the soldiers’ letters which have been published in the Press are a revelation to us—written as they are in the vivid and graphic style which can only be reached when the story is told in those words which naturally offer themselves to the teller. I cannot do better than quote a letter written by a patient in the American Women’s War Hospital at Paignton, of which Hospital Committee I am Chairman. Describing how he was

wounded, he writes : “ My pals dropped all round me in two and threes. I wondered when my turn would come and what it would feel like when it did come. I had not long to wait. I had gone about fifty yards when bang !—crack ! Got it in the leg. Just throwing my arms up in the air—bang ! Got it again in the upper arm ! Down I go ! . . . You should have seen me digging a hole with my chin in the soft ground. I couldn’t get low enough, the bullets were flying over my head within an inch at times. Believe me it was just like as if the very earth had gone mad and Hell turned loose. But there—you can never imagine what it was like.” From his description I rather think we can !

On the whole it would not be true to say that the gentlest of arts is a thing of the past. There will always be good letters written so long as people are interested in each other, and distance separates them. The art of letter-writing has been summed up in a few words. Writing when it is artless is very easy ; when it is art it is very difficult ; but when it is neither it is impossible.

Vanity

VANITY. The very word seems to preen and prune itself, with its encompassing V and sweeping Y. Its six letters represent for good or for evil nearly all the foibles of the human character. How often is it the incentive both to crime and noble actions. The destruction of the Greek Temple of Diana at Ephesus is a well - worn illustration—nevertheless true—of how far this characteristic, or should one say vice, can be carried. Without wishing, however, to analyse too deeply the motives which, sometimes, inspire acts of generosity and valour, it cannot be denied that, under the cloak of sacrifice, many fine deeds are done for the sake of personal honour and glory.

The writer was told once by the late Duke of Persigny, Napoleon the Third's faithful friend and adviser, of the visit to London of the beautiful

and celebrated Madame de Castiglione, whom he knew well. Adulated and adored during her stay, on leaving she was escorted to the station by a crowd of admirers of which he was one, all vying with each other for a last word or touch of her hand. The Beauty, whose face was covered with a thick veil to preserve her marvellous complexion, addressed them from the carriage window in these words : “ You have all been kind and generous and I will fitly reward you. You shall look upon me once more ! ” She lifted her veil and allowed them to gaze upon her perfect features until the moving train probably jogged her off her feet. This same lady, history relates, despairing at the wrinkling and fattening of Time, hid herself entirely from the world where her loveliness had reigned supreme for so long, even her attendants barely being allowed to see her. She preferred a solitary miserable life for the sake of her vanity, to the enjoyment of the undoubted pleasures of an intelligent old age.

How different this from the conduct of Georgina Countess of Dudley, often acknow-

ledged the most beautiful Englishwoman of the last generation. In the heyday of her youth and beauty people would line the streets outside her door to catch a glimpse of her ; and to this day the capitals of Europe remember her triumphal tour at the time of the great Vienna Exhibition. No Queen could have been more feted. Yet to meet her, one would have thought that she was unconscious of her loveliness. Her beauty never gave her a thought, which, of course, made people all the more eager to recognise it, for can there be anything more irritating than the self-conscious woman who wants perpetually to be told of her good looks ? Lady Dudley, with her now silvery grey hair, the mother of many sons and grandsons, is still an ornament of the Court and society she graces with her presence.

Personal Vanity is, perhaps, the most common and the least harmful of the many forms vanity can take, for it hurts no one but yourself, and to be vain of your good looks is not only a sign of weakness, but is foolish, for, after all, beauty is not of your own choosing. Also, there may be two opinions on the matter. But though you

should put away all superfluity of vanity, a little is decidedly needed for that self-confidence without which it is difficult to go through the world. The woman who knows that she has her share of good looks, without necessarily dwelling on them, has the comfortable feeling that she is not handicapped. The human being whom nature has endowed with comeliness starts life with a good letter of introduction.

Schopenhauer, that sour woman-hater, gave women no souls, and tarring them all with the same brush, pronounced them only fit for the frivolities and vanities of life. It is possible that he had no success with them, which might account for his scathing criticisms. But it is curious and, perhaps, not very flattering to the female sex that they, alone, should be allowed to boast of their personal looks, whereas in all countries, and certainly among the Anglo-Saxon races, the vain man is an object of ridicule and contempt. Men's looks do not count. In speaking of a woman you invariably say : "How was she looking ?"—of a man, "How is he ?"

Mirabeau, one of the ugliest of men, was celebrated for his successes with the fair sex, and Wilkes was known to boast that, given half an hour's start, he would compete for a woman's favours with the handsomest man in England.

If a man is vain, he tries his best to hide it, for, apart from knowing his good looks are a mere physical accident, he must, if he is not an arrant fool, be reminded at times rather disconcertingly of the cock-bird in his spring plumage or the peacock strutting in his brilliant feathers. And, naturally, such forcible reminders of his animal origin tend to disturb his peace of mind.

As a clever writer once said on this subject : It needs no human intelligence to be vain of your looks ; and to betray that vanity seems to prove that you lack the human reserve which most human beings have inherited as an instinct.

A sense of humour, that salve of so many ills, is the best corrective of vanity. No one with a sense of the ridiculous could really be openly guilty of an exhibition of conceit. Yet so humourless are some that, recently, the writer was told by a prominent painter the following

little story. A well-known and good-looking woman writer agreed to sit to him for her portrait. On the day fixed, she rushed in an hour or two late—wonderfully and fearfully dressed.

“Frankly, is it any use my sitting to you ?” she began breathlessly.

“Why not ?” asked the astonished artist.
“I understood—I thought you wanted to.”

“Well on reflection I repeat, is it any use ? Look at me ! My eyes are so luminous and my skin so dazzlingly white—and yet creamy—that surely you cannot hope adequately to give any idea of them on canvas. As for my hair—well, it is very Titianesque and difficult to reproduce. And I know and have often been told that the enigmatic expression of my mouth and its curves would be the despair of any artist. . . . I think, in fact, you are going to attempt an impossible task ?” she added tentatively.

“I think so too,” said the artist. “Good morning.”

And this woman really is intelligent and writes well !

We know that it is often the case that men and women of even exceptional brains have their little vanities. But, perhaps, this is only a trick of Nature to help them keep their balance and make them more human. Yet, there can never be any real justification of Vanity ; the best that can be said is that it is a perverted form of self-respect.

Personality

CARLYLE said that only three men in the world's history had been capable of what he called "individual existence"—Cæsar, Cromwell, and Buonaparte. Their personality was as great as their achievements, which in men of mark is not always the case. It is extremely difficult to arrive at the exact meaning of "personality," which we meet with in far less exalted individuals. If we go to the dictionary it is not much help to find that the Latin *persona* means "a mask," or "one who wears a mask—an actor"; in fact it rather confuses us, as to most people the idea of personality could not exist without the dropping of the mask and the showing of the real individual. This contradiction has been explained by the suggestion that the showing or manifestation of oneself is akin to the actor's art of expression.

Whatever the definition, the general idea of a personality is one who adheres to his own beliefs, rightly or wrongly, and to his own mode of life, without fear or respect of his surroundings. This independence of thought and action carried to excess can easily degenerate into eccentricity, which cannot be tolerated unless wedded to great achievement. It took Carlyle's *French Revolution* to excuse his eccentric personality.

Personality must undoubtedly make its mark on its own time. But to live in posterity personality without achievement needs the intelligent and sympathetic biographer. What would the memory of Dr. Johnson be without Boswell ? for his most lively and amusing personality certainly does not appear either in his dictionary or other writings, and the reputation of which, according to a great writer, is every day fading, while his peculiarities are remembered. Nothing gives a better glimpse of the man than Mrs. Thrale's account of how he brow-beat two gentlemen who were relating their experiences in the West Indies and in Gibraltar. "It is not so. It cannot be true.

Don't tell that story again. You cannot think how poor a figure you make in telling it." I wonder how much of such plain speaking would our *raconteurs* of to-day stand ?

The majority of individuals one meets in this world might be compared to a straight line, and the personalities to dots which, breaking the monotony, catch one's eye and impress themselves upon one.

Probably everyone is born with some distinctive inherited qualities—children, for instance, are full of distinctive traits ; but how often are these lost in the process of conventional education—in England especially, where the ambition of School Boards in general and teachers in particular is to turn them all out on the same mould, and what originality is left is obliterated later on by what is acquired in life. Their thoughts are other people's thoughts, they talk in quotations, and their actions are regulated for them by Public Opinion. But after all, there may be some excuse for them, for as a rule personality has told us "nothing is so rare in anyone as a thought of his own ! "

If I remember rightly, Lord Rosebery—in a speech which he made some years ago—involved against the habit of reading the newspapers too much and by so doing stifling individual thought, and accepting and adopting ready-made opinions on all subjects, following out of laziness the line of least resistance. It does not follow that all those who read the newspapers become stupid, or vice versa, and all will not agree with Charles Lamb's friend who said he had given up reading, to the great improvement of his originality.

In statesmen personality has often gone much further than their achievements. Take Mr. Gladstone. No one impressed his individuality more upon his time than he. His eloquence moved thousands—his name was one to conjure with. His personality was immense. Yet history will not be able to record any great results to his credit such as those put down to figures like Cavour and Bismarck, whose achievements equalled their personality.

A distinguished Member of Parliament once said to me that he considered Mr. Balfour a

danger to the House of Commons, as his individual charm was so great that he persuaded people against their convictions.

There are soldiers and sailors whose popularity is out of all proportion with their achievements. A well-known general in South Africa was the idol of his men. He failed to lead them to victory, but never failed to feed them well. An admiral whose bravery is undeniable but whose principal achievement in life has been that of criticising everything and everybody to the detriment of his own advancement, is adored in the Navy by most of the rising generation owing to his attractive personality, breezy manner and pretty wit. On the other hand, a cold reserved man, whose successful actions give him a right to a page in history, goes through life misunderstood and probably disliked, and with a poor chance of having even the doubtful reward of posthumous justice.

The great secret of personality is the power of expressiveness—of giving oneself,—if there is anything to give. This is why artists as a rule have personality, and as I have already

said, children have it in a marked degree. The saying that the child is father to the man is, however, only true where the character is very strong and the individuality is retained through life.

There is the fictitious personality for which the Public may be blamed. If people sufficiently prominent for one reason or another succeed in surrounding themselves with an atmosphere of mystery the interest of the public is aroused, for the possibilities of a "dark horse" are always attractive. There are men and women we well know who can, through their personality, live down scandals, whereas the less favoured go under, emphasising the old saying that "one man may steal a horse while another may not look over the wall."

How often in matrimonial difficulties the more culpable of the two is given all the sympathy owing to greater attractiveness.

Personality in whatever circumstances is always a vital force. Queen Victoria in a cottage would probably have ruled the village.

Personality exercises a vast influence and is

not the prerogative of great people. Without it, it is true, the front rank can never be reached, but, on the other hand, its complete fulfilment is only possible where it is combined with the power to achieve and attain.

Intolerance

INTOLERANCE is certainly not among the Christian virtues, nor among the pagan ones for the matter of that. But I imagine that savages—not that I know much of their customs—do make a virtue of intolerance. What they cannot tolerate, they generally kill, and think they are right to do so.

Intolerance represents to most of us a want of imagination and comprehension, a narrow mind bound in red tape, and often as obstinate as it is ignorant. There is the intolerance of age resisting everything new, and the intolerance of youth of everything old. I remember a year or two ago being taken in to supper at some entertainment by a young man. I naturally took his arm to go down to the dining-room ; to my astonishment he said, “ Oh ! we don’t do that any more, it is old-fashioned.” “ But why not ? ” I exclaimed.

“ Surely it is a time-honoured courtesy which is as graceful as it is convenient ; I might slip on the stairs, or put my foot through my dress, and your timely aid ”—but he would not have it at any price. “ Silly old custom ! looks frumpy ! ” And so we stalked in one after the other—he first, I think. The intolerance the youth of to-day feels towards anything which gives a little trouble has revolutionised the manners of society.

Then you have the pedant’s intolerant attitude, refusing all things not absolutely correct and warranted by tradition. Pedants in society, in letters, in military strategy. “ This shall not be done because it never has been done ”—people who cannot be moved or accept new conditions. High explosives ! What nonsense ! They were not needed twenty years ago, why should they be now ?—taking the don’t-try-to-teach-me attitude which the old school so often adopts. In art it is very conspicuous. Quite recently we have witnessed a controversy in respect to the sculptor Mestrovic’s work. He may please or may not according to taste and

knowledge, but that he has undoubted talent, nay genius, is admitted by such artists as Sargent, Lavery, and Rodin, but there are many so-called artists, faithful copyists of the classic traditions, who in their intolerance will not allow him a vestige of talent.

On the other hand, the futurist artists are equally intolerant. Marinettile, the Italian leader of the movement, writing to me, once argued that every tradition of the finest art, even that of the Greeks, ought to be destroyed as it stifled all new inspiration. "*Il faut cracher sur l'autel de l'art tous les jours,*" was his characteristic phrase. Of course the intolerance of this absurdly extreme view defeats its own end and prevents any further discussion. A prominent English sculptor, speaking of Mestrovic's work, abused it for its ugliness, for "Art should be beautiful," he said, but it is extraordinary how personal intolerance can limit the scope of beauty. What individual is able to decide for others what is beautiful, or to lay down the law in matters of taste?

Religious intolerance has always been to the fore, and perhaps never more so than in the time

of the Inquisition. But possibly it may be argued that the motives of that extraordinary body were not so cruel as its acts. A fanatic generally has a conscientious leg to stand on ! And it may be that the very violence of its methods made people accept gratefully the gentler forms of religion afterwards.

Men have always been frightfully intolerant of women encroaching, as they say, on what they consider their prerogatives. From the days when a woman who stepped out of the ordinary routine of a narrow life ran the risk of being thought a witch, and, worse, being burnt as such, to the present time, any new enterprise on the part of woman is apt to excite discreditable jealousy on the part of men. One of the few bright aspects of the present horrible war has been the proved utility of women in unaccustomed fields of work, which is sweeping away the old prejudices and is establishing, we hope, a wider sphere of activity for women when the war is over.

The intolerance which we meet in the daily traffic of life is the hardest to bear on the

principle that it is the "little miseries of life" which bring forth the big tragedies. "Live and let live" is a wide and generous maxim, but the intolerant say, "I live as I like, but I cannot endure that you should live as you like." The peace of domestic relations is proverbially disturbed by intolerance. A friend of mine, with a decided talent for music, had a husband who had no ear for melody and did not even think like Dr. Johnson that "of all noises music is the least disagreeable." He quite forgot that his tobacco habits were even more intolerable to her than were her musical habits to him. Their mutual intolerance led eventually to their separating.

There must be very few people who can say that they are not intolerant on some subject or other. How often people try to force their own opinions and tastes on others instead of choosing the least line of resistance and "suffering fools gladly."

The expression "a man of the world," meaning a man who does not expect too much of the world, is due I think to men being as a rule

more tolerant than women—perhaps, owing to their greater liberty and experience of life, they naturally take a broader view. But this broad-mindedness is not conspicuous in their attitude towards women. This touches a controversy, however, far beyond the scope of this article.

On the whole it is hardly open to question that it is better to be tolerant than intolerant, notwithstanding that there is a certain kind of intolerance which may lead to good. We are right to be tolerant of human weakness, but not of human wickedness. It might be said that “toleration in all things” is as true and untrue as most platitudes.

The Peace that War Begets

“**B**USINESS going on as usual while the map of Europe is being changed” was the notice which might rightly have been put over London at the outbreak of the war. On the surface everything seemed the same with the exception of the appearance of the taxicabs with their Government Appeal to Arms placards, and the unwonted animation of the streets, full of khaki-clad soldiers and stranded strangers and refugees.

War has a curious effect on Society. At first startled and incredulous, it reminds one of a hare or rabbit caught at night in the glare of an advancing automobile, paralysed for a moment, then rushing hither and thither blindly before finally making up its mind which course to take.

The South African War came upon us gradually. Rumours had been rife for months. I remember meeting the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain about three months before. "It is bound to come, we must have it," he said, "and the sooner the better." England thought and looked upon it practically in the nature of a punitive expedition. "Those wretched Boers must be taught a lesson, their arrogance was not to be tolerated." London Society was quite gay over it—soldiers were tumbling over each other to get out to the Front and "see the fun," the only fear they had was to be too late. Those "darlings of the gods," our sporting Guardsmen, looked upon it as a big-game expedition, and all thought the war "such as it was" would be over in a couple of months.

It was nearly four years before the last shot was fired !

The horror of the news of the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and his charming wife had barely subsided when Austria declared war on Serbia. I remember coming up to London from the country where the situation was

mildly discussed, and going to headquarters to gather news, but principally on the Home Rule Bill, which at that moment was occupying all our thoughts. I was met by grave faces. "Make no mistake," I was told, "Ireland and all our troubles are as nothing compared with this, before ten days are out thousands and thousands of men of all nationalities will be cutting each other's throats, and who knows how soon we come in."

With incredible swiftness the situation developed, and we were soon up to our necks in the most terrible war the world has ever seen.

During the South African War every kind of entertainment was organised to raise funds, from patriotic concerts to cafés chantants, to say nothing of tableaux in which all the leading smart ladies took part, vieing with each other in gorgeous array. Large sums were realised. The theatres were full, every form of amusement which could be used to raise money was employed.

But how different is the present attitude. Time, that relentless factor in modern warfare,

is spurring us on. We ask for money outright. This is no war seven thousand miles away, it is grimly at our doors, we cannot waste a moment or a penny. In a short time, a very short time, the whole country realised its horrors, and there was a general stiffening of shoulders and squaring of jaws.

In July, 1914, all thoughts were turned to Ireland and the prospect of civil war, from the Kaiser, who was counting on it, to the fair Irish politician with her hospital and rows of nurses, all prepared for the worst. The Home Rule question had in Society made things very acute. The Conservative and Liberal parties refused to meet, and many instances of rudeness on both sides were recorded. The day war was declared Carson and Redmond shook hands behind the Speaker's Chair in the House of Commons, and the social world of both parties met once more. All was forgotten in a common cause—the Cause of Justice and Patriotism—and to the confusion of the enemy, the English nation had, as it has now, but one voice.

There is nothing more interesting in a crisis

than to watch the practically immediate demarcation between the real and the artificial people, between the talkers and the doers. I was much interested in the early days of the war to meet a woman renowned for her brilliant conversation. She was holding a circle of friends in absorbed and rapt attention, the European situation in all its details was at her finger-tips, and the latest news with all its rumours on her lips. But when I asked her what she intended to do and tried to advise some practical way of being helpful, the muscles of her face relaxed, her eyes lost their fire, and she ceased to be interested. Another who offered to do "anything" could not find in a long list of simple hospital work, or A, B, C clerical routine, something to suit her. She could not even visit the pitiful wives of the soldiers and sailors left behind, for fear of "catching microbes." Then you have those who only care to figure in the limelight, the "Idle Bosses" as some call them. But this type of "Work-shy Willie," male and female, appears few and far between. Indeed, it is an object lesson to see how women in England face

these anxious times. Quietly and without fuss they have set to work, many with aching hearts for the lonely home, bereft of husband, sons, or brothers gone to the Front. They have said good-bye with a smile on their faces and a brave shake hands.

The Americans settled here have not been behind in bestirring themselves, and, helped by their compatriots, are making a brave show in the way of hospitals and war charities. How long these hospitals and many others may be needed is impossible to say. But there is no doubt women find a comparative peace in steady and absorbing work, while awaiting with anxious prayers for the great and final Peace which this iniquitous war is sure to beget.

Indiscretion

IN the early Victorian days the word “ indiscretion ” bore a greater significance in some applications than it does now. For instance, if the morals of an “ elegant female ”—as the fashionable woman of that period was dubbed—called for censure, it was said that her behaviour was “ indiscreet,” which was equivalent to social ruin. Nowadays the word applied in the same sense does not represent anything so serious.

Indiscretion is not a crime, it is not even a vice, but the result is sometimes as far-reaching and as harmful to the author and to the victim.

How many plans have been wrecked, how many homes broken up by what that one word—indiscretion—represents ? How many diplomatic relations have been severed by the heed-

less babbling of young attachés—how many marriages nipped in the bud by the premature and indiscreet congratulations of idle busy-bodies ! In time of war how often has the Press, thirsting to give news at any price, given away information which has been of service to the enemy !

It was notorious that during the South African War the English newspapers kept the Boers well informed of every movement of the British troops. The Russo-Japanese War has taught us the value of secrecy and silence, hence the much-abused censorship in this country, which, though inadequate, is better than nothing.

To repeat unpleasant remarks to those that were the subject of them is a very common form of tale-bearing, but those who indulge in it either carry indiscretion to the point of imbecility or veil a truly venomous malice under an affectation of duty.

On the whole, the indiscretions of a fool are the worst to deal with, for you do not suspect him, whereas you are on your guard with the Iagos of society, and, their reputation once

established, you take everything they say with the proverbial grain of salt.

But there are different kinds of indiscretion. We know the kind which voices what is at the back of people's minds but which they do not wish expressed in words. The King of Bavaria's recent remarks come into this category when he gave his views on the extension of German frontiers and the fulfilment of his dreams of better connection in South Germany with the sea. The German Press commented on this Royal indiscretion as severely as they dared.

The usefulness of the intended diplomatic indiscretion, on the other hand, is well known. Purposely to blurt out something with a great air of candour is the most subtle form of dissimulation, and goes farther—like the value of a compliment which is much enhanced by being grudgingly or inadvertently paid, and, therefore, easier to swallow.

In statesmen one would imagine that indiscretion was very dangerous, and yet there are those who are trusted notwithstanding it.

A friend of mine lost an important post by

prematurely talking about it ; and I remember once that, for the sake of making a *bon mot*, I nearly upset a most important political combination—as a pebble can upset a coach.

On the eve of a political crisis a statesman said to me in the course of conversation that he had at last made up his mind which way he intended to vote the next day. “I shall be a man or a mouse,” he exclaimed—“or a rat,” said I, and instantly regretted the words when I saw his serious and annoyed face.

But, having said so much on the iniquities of indiscretion, I feel one ought to look at the other side of the question.

The indiscretions of youth are often noble, and those of childhood often delicious, for are they not nearer the truth than anything else in life ? A good many years ago an old diplomat, who rather pestered me with his visits, called on me. I was occupied in writing a letter, and asked his permission to finish it. While I was doing so, he amused himself by talking to one of my children, then about five or six years old. To

my horror I heard him say, “ Yes, and what does your mamma say about me ? ”

“ Oh, my mamma says that, like all tiresome foreigners, you never know when to go.”

This home-truth had the desired effect, and I was spared further visits.

To be called discreet is not altogether a compliment—in public life it is more than necessary, but in private life a little indiscretion is often welcome, because one knows that it is only the defect of certain charming qualities—simplicity, spontaneity, and fearlessness, which is always charming. It may be indiscreet to wear your heart on your sleeve for the daws to peck at, or to express your opinions too frankly, but that sort of indiscreet person is more lovable, and one is more likely to respect them than the sleek, snug, truly discreet type.

After all, indiscretion need not necessarily be either malicious or foolish. For instance, to speak the truth, which is a virtue, is sometimes indiscreet. Discreet memoirs are dull, stale, and unprofitable, and as for our poets—

where would they be did discretion always guide their pen ?

How indiscreet of Juliet to come out on the balcony ! Had she paused and reflected, Romeo would have waited in vain, and we should not have had one of the greatest love poems in the world.

If discretion, as it is said, is the better part of valour, then certainly it is the worse part which shines in war time, for discretion was not responsible for the charge of the Light Brigade, or for the glorious feat of Lieutenant Warneford. There are times, all the same, when one could wish that the courage of our troops could be leavened by a little discretion.

“ It was glorious,” said an eye-witness, “ to see our men after the engagement *strolling* back smoking cigarettes although the artillery of the enemy was still active. The soldiers of any other country would have *crawled* along the ground, taking advantage of any available cover.”

The fact is that active qualities are generally more lovable than passive ones. Indiscretion

at its best is active, and can be noble. Discretion is passive, and at its best is wise.

If the nobility of one could only be combined with the wisdom of the other, we should have an ideal state of things.

Benevolence

BENEVOLENCE ! Why has this virtue a sound about it almost Early Victorian ? Why is it always associated in our minds with old Greybeards, or, if we turn to the opposite sex, with Ladies Bountiful, and the visiting of cottages with the inevitable soup dole ? Why is it considered to be a virtue becoming only to the elderly ? For surely there is no age in life at which it is not enviable to have goodwill in our hearts towards others, and to make allowances for everyone.

In those searching hours of the night when sleep has fled, and our vitality is at its lowest, our conscience probably reminds us of how much we ought to cultivate this most neglected of virtues. We know that as war lets loose all the most hideous passions, so at the same time does it bring out the most sublime qualities,

and inspires a self-sacrificing spirit. Never have the really benevolent been more appreciated than at the present time. For malevolence open or hidden, disguised in the shape of criticism, stalks abroad, in the fighting line, in the hospital, in official circles, and in private houses.

In time of war, when success naturally is worshipped, and severe criticism of any failure is rampant, benevolent feeling is wanted even more than action. Think of the cruelty meted out to one in a responsible position who in any way fails. Take a sailor, for instance, a man who has been in the navy all his life. He has for years done the routine of peace, and at the age of forty-five or so, by duty and perseverance, arrives nearly at the top of his profession. Then comes the war his soul has longed for—active service at last ! A big battle—a moment's hesitation—a blunder—a catastrophe—and in half an hour the work of his lifetime is destroyed.

Public opinion gallops away with the ruined man's reputation. All the malevolence of the idle and the envious is poured on him. "I

always said he would be no good when put to the test." . . . "I knew him to be a rotter." . . . "Was it too much rum made him turn to the right instead of the left"—("he" being probably a teetotaller)—"or was it pronounced symptoms of the white feather?" And so on *ad libitum*.

Of course, success is vital. . . . But the Benevolent will try to let the poor fellow down gently—to draw a veil over his inefficiency. After all, there is no denying a blunder is a crime in war time. But are not his shattered hopes of ambition and glory punishment enough?

I remember a friend in the diplomatic service who complained bitterly of the dull and uninteresting posts he had for years filled. Then a war broke out. And suddenly he found himself a most important personage and the eyes of Europe upon him. Alas! he lost his head—and his post.

Yes, the inefficients are always a trial, but the efficient who do the criticising might bring in that benevolence which makes them temper it with mercy. For how do any of us know how

we, ourselves, will stand the test of a crisis until we have been in one ?

It may be argued that we must not be too easy-going, but it is much easier to think the worst and judge—than to think the best and withhold criticism.

Since the war has engendered so much charitable work of all kinds, I have realised how important Benevolence is—and when it is absent, how very quickly malevolence takes its place. How much less of an effort it is for a rich man to be merely charitable—to sit down and write a cheque (which he does not miss) than to be truly benevolent—to take a real and living interest in the object he is asked to help ! For how few rich people go into all the details of a scheme sympathetically, and thoroughly understand how the money is to be applied, before they give their cheques ?

There are two kinds of donors. The first heads with a big sum a big list of big Funds for a big Charity ! The second—and he is the truly benevolent giver—wishing to help some struggling and probably unknown under-

taking, first stimulates the workers with his interest, advice, and sympathy, and then gives his money.

We are told not “to look a gift horse in the mouth,” and I am, perhaps, not practising the virtue I so much admire when I say that, although in action people have been splendid in this war—showing unexampled generosity and a general willingness to do anything in their power—there are possibly others who have one eye on the advertising side, and whose lavishness is in proportion to their hope of present or future recognition.

Ladies have been portrayed in *Punch* who, while practising according to their own lights great benevolence in taking out wounded soldiers for drives, ask at the hospital for “those with the most conspicuous bandages, please. The last lot of officers you gave us might not have been wounded at all for all anyone could see.” And there may be some truth in this skit.

Like the word Charity, which once signified the beginning and end of all human endeavours

and service, the word Benevolence has, it seems to me, rather lost its original meaning—which is to wish well in heart as well as in act ; in fact, Benevolence is now too often confounded with Charity in its more modern and narrow sense, which means merely to give materially.

As a last thought on the subject, it would be comforting to have it said to one, as Meredith said to a friend :

“ How full of heart for all,
And chiefly for the worker by the wall,
You bore that lamp of sane benevolence ! ”

Discipline

HE who has arrived at the perfect discipline of mind and body has, indeed, found the Philosopher's stone. I do not mean the accepted discipline which comes from the outside, but self-imposed discipline—that is the stumbling-block! The person who is perpetually saying “I make it a rule” or “I draw the line” may be a bore and full of righteous dullness, but there is no doubt that if he religiously carries out his task he has arrived at that condition of perfect reliance and self-control which is the foundation of a strong character.

And what a happy frame of mind it is to know that the promises you have made to yourself you have the strength and certainty to carry out. Think of the hardy annuals in the shape of New Year resolutions which come to nought, and alas! by the time we get a

grip on ourselves and assimilate a little discipline into our system our life's short race is nearly run.

In this terrible war Discipline plays a gigantic part. According to General Hindenburg, Germany's most popular hero, victory will rest with the most disciplined troops. But there are different kinds of discipline. The German Army is like a machine in its blind obedience, but machines have been known to get out of order.

Be that as it may, to illustrate the wonderful command the German officer has over his subaltern, a friend of mine who has a small hospital in Lancashire told me that she had among the wounded two Germans, one an officer of sixty years of age, with a bullet in his leg, and a young private who, owing to a very severe wound in his head, had to be trepanned. As the accommodation was limited, they were put in the same room. A few days after the operation, a nurse coming in found the private up and struggling to put on his clothes. Horrified, she exclaimed, "What on earth are you doing out of bed?"

The officer answered for him. "I wanted a glass of water."

"But," explained the nurse, "he has had a serious operation and must be kept quiet; this may kill him."

"I wanted a glass of water, and I am his superior officer," was all the Colonel would say.

The private thought it quite natural, but after that an orderly was put in the room.

More than blind obedience is required here. Such discipline can only be kindled by some fierce passion. The spirit of war still lingered in this poor damaged head and made him feel that he must obey even if it killed him.

Strangely enough, notwithstanding the wonderful technical appliances of modern warfare, the part played by the spirit is increased rather than diminished, and the great bravery evinced by both sides is another proof that the inward spirit has much to do with the cast-iron methods of discipline which have been attained.

Sometimes, however, the inward spirit has a little too much to do with it! It may not

be amiss here to recall an experience I had when I went to South Africa with the hospital ship *Maine* at the time of the Boer war. Our staff on board, apart from the crew, was composed of military men, St. John Ambulance men, American surgeons, female nurses, and male nurses from the Mill's school. These heterogeneous elements worked fairly well together, but working in harmony was not accomplished without a certain amount of tact on the part of those in authority.

The British contingent, accustomed as they were to rigid discipline, obeyed all orders from superior officers without a murmur, whereas the Americans evidently thought that to carry out an order without an argument was derogatory to the American spirit of independence, forgetting that, as John Inglesant said, "When on duty the first instinct of a gentleman is to obey."

The present war has yielded many a fruitful lesson in discipline to us women here in England. Eighteen months ago, how many of us were novices in the work we wished to take in hand

—from the organising of real working committees to the management of full-blown hospitals! Many voluntary hospitals have had to learn the bitter lessons of patience and obedience to the authorities before they were allowed to be of any active use, particularly those that went abroad, a spirit of free lance and adventure permeating most of this voluntary aid.

An unfortunate officer who was in charge of the personnel of one of these hospitals told me he had such a terrifying experience that even the horrors of the battlefield seemed to pale before it. Each of the twenty charming society ladies who compose the hospital unit had a theory of her own as to nursing and hospital management, and a fixed idea as to where this particular one should be established. Happily a couple of months of enforced patience and submission to discipline wrought a wonderful change. These rebellious ones soon formed an integral part of an efficient hard-working hospital.

On the other hand, one of the most successful ambulances at the Front is that under Professor

Norton of Boston, and the reason one of the staff gave me for this success was that they "went where they were told and did what they were told" by the authorities, the result being that this corps has been placed in a privileged position, and in the responsibility with which it has been entrusted it has given a lead to many others.

As a contemporary so truly says—there are people who judge every world-wide event by its effect upon their investments, and who cannot experience it at all except as a rise or fall of income. But even the worst of us have our standards, lower than which we will not fall, and having set that standard we must discipline ourselves so that we say with our gallant men in the Navy—"Thou shalt not criticise, but obey."

Extravagance

WHAT lessons this war is teaching us ! And not the least is the necessity for thrift, at best an unpopular virtue.

There is no doubt that before the war here in England we were getting into a recklessness of expenditure which had advanced in an amazing fashion the last twenty years. Only a year or two ago Mrs. Asquith, as a witness in a court of law, was obliged to admit that extravagance was more likely to be an “open sesame” than a barrier to Society.

To go a little further back, in the 'seventies and 'eighties a young couple with social aspirations thought £2000 a year or thereabouts ample income to marry on, whereas in this twentieth century few of the *jeunesse dorée* would venture to live on what they would consider such a miserable pittance.

I remember the late millionaire, Mr. James

R. Keene, telling me that what struck him the most on his visits to England was the amount of people who had £4000 or £5000 a year and how extremely well everyone lived, but he did not realise that in so-called Society extravagance and extravagant ideas had arrived at such a pitch that very few marriages took place.

But this war is revolutionising everything ; we are becoming more simple—primitive, in fact, and it is no longer thought a crime to be poor. The present crisis has given, moreover, a wonderful stimulus to the marriage market. Fired by the thought of the “ girl he is leaving behind him,” the young soldier of to-day, regardless of pounds, shillings, and pence, rushes into matrimony before going off to the front, or while at home on a few days’ leave from the trenches.

That everything will be changed when this great struggle is over is a certainty, and we shall surely resort to a simpler mode of life which will last for at least a generation or two. For the more virile a nation becomes the more

she seeks for, and asks for, simplicity and truth. All the shallow, stupid, snobbish habits which were beginning to blot out our horizon are vanishing like mists before the sun.

In France the simple life is still more the order of the day. Even in the richest families, establishments have been reduced to two maid-servants, and only two dishes suffice for dinner. Some French people have even gone so far as to have a cold *buffet*, consisting of the plainest and most homely food, laid out in the dining-room, at which the household generally has to help itself, thereby dispensing with all service. Added to this, the Governor of Paris has forbidden all music in public, and so, in the once gay city, there is a chastening of the body and soul which, to say the least, must be depressing.

English people, who are supposed to take their pleasures sadly, are taking their trials with a much lighter heart.

In London theatres and concerts are crowded. But then we have not got the enemy entrenched at Reading, which is the equal distance of

Soissons from Paris ; and we do not dwell on air-raids, as, up to now, they have proved from the strategic standpoint to be too futile to worry us.

The most extravagant are undoubtedly altering their ways. Take the matter of dress. Even the women who are rich enough not to feel appreciably the pinch of war, do not—I might even say dare not—indulge in buying new frocks and furbelows. To be dressed in the latest fashion is not to be in the right note. To look too smart argues too much thought of oneself. If perchance a frivolous one appears in a new dress she invariably apologises for it. “ I was absolutely in rags,” or “ This is only a wretched little garment my maid has run up for me.”

Then again in the matter of food and of servants, everything is changed. “ Jeames de la Pluche ” has gone and Mary Ann is to the fore with her trim cap and apron. Nowadays, instead of the ceremonious written invitation to dinner, a message generally comes by telephone, “ Do come and dine. But hope you won’t mind

—only war fare ! ” Most of the powdered flunkeys so dear to the heart of Mayfair and Belgravia have thrown off the badge of servitude and in enlisting have found their manhood.

What a leveller is khaki. The sloping-shouldered, shifty-eyed footman returns after six weeks or two months’ training with a straight back and a bold eye to take leave before going to the Front, and you grasp him by the hand and wish him “ God speed,” and think him more than an equal. To help him and his like, to get him comforts when in the trenches, and aid when he returns, perhaps a battered wreck of humanity, you feel you would if necessary wear the same garment until the war was over, like Isabella of Austria, who, while besieging Ostend, boldly enough took an oath that she would not change her linen until the town was taken. Evidently women in olden days thought this a most efficacious contribution to the war, as the same story is told of Isabella of Castile at the siege of Grenada !

With diminishing incomes and an increasing

cost of living, people are forced to retrench. To the natural "pincher" this is a boon, and he takes every advantage of it. One such rich man was asked the other day what he was contributing to the war. Taken aback, after a moment's hesitation, he said : "Well ! I've put all my servants on half wages." . . . But, on the other hand, a contemporary justly points out that we owe something to extravagance, for thrift and adventure seldom go hand in hand, and those who have been driven by empty pockets out of this country to try their luck at the ends of the earth have made the best of colonists.

There are few topics of social controversy more frequent than the relative extravagance of men and women, and neither sex will ever give in as to which should claim the supremacy.

"Just consider what you spend on dress," says the man.

"What about your sport?" retorts the fair one.

"Think how much you fritter away in things you do not need," he reminds her.

"Think of the sums you lose gambling," she replies, and so on *ad infinitum*.

There is no doubt that money made by the "sweat of the brow" is not usually squandered. But as the majority of women do not make money they naturally have a greater capacity for spending it. However, no rule can be laid down; it is a matter of temperament and habit. Women are as capable of as great self-denial as men, but their bringing-up is different, and, not habitually having the responsibility of money, they are content in many cases to have merely the spending of an allowance which is often elastic.

Touching once more on women and their clothes, there is no doubt that public opinion is, as someone has said, the mystic force which makes women dress or not dress—dress well or dress badly—dress foolishly or with comely grace. After all, it is not the money spent on adornment which ensures success, but the appropriateness of the dress to the exigencies of the wearer's life and circumstances. As economy should be the great factor in the choosing of

clothes in war time, suitability and individual becomingness shculd be more than ever studied, for it has always been and always will be essential that women, however employed, should look as attractive as they can.

The following definition of economy as practised by both sexes may be true, if not flatterin . “ A man will pay half a crown for a sixpenny thing that he wants, and a woman will pay sixpence for a half-crown thing that she does not want ! ”

Light-heartedness

“ **I**T is a sad heart that never rejoices,”—
“ and a sad saint is a sad sort of saint.” To go about with a long and gloomy face cannot help anyone. Life with its trials and tribulations taken with a grain of light-hearted philosophy loses half its sting. To laugh at the wrong moment is better than not to laugh at all.

Responsibility should make people serious, but a grave and reverend manner and a portentously solemn speech are not always proofs of seriousness. “ What prevents him who laughs from telling the truth ? ” . . . How often are we tempted to laugh about what we feel most deeply—for instance, in describing some harrowing scene or in listening to one.

Even in the presence of death itself, a light-hearted spirit has been known to prevail. Before to-day, men have died with a jest on their lips. Charles II and Byron are hackneyed examples.

Then, there is the story of the late Mr. Labouchere, the famous editor of *Truth*. Two hours before his death, a nurse upset a methylated spirit-lamp on the table by his bedside. "Flames!" he exclaimed. "Not yet, I hope." And only the other day, a dying soldier was asked by a hospital chaplain if he should read him a prayer. "Give me Harry Lauder," he answered feebly. And to the strains on the gramophone of "Stop your tickling, Jock," he passed away.

It is interesting to remember that in medieval days light-heartedness, not to say levity, was not thought incongruous with earnest faith and religious observance. How strange to our eyes are the grotesque and in some cases profane decorations with which the beautiful gothic cathedrals of the past are adorned, the monstrous gargoyle without and the caricatures in wood and stone within. The old miracle-plays are as full of broad humour as a modern music-hall, and would keep the censor busy to-day. Even the saints must have their jokes. Was not St. Lawrence reported to have said while on his

gridiron, “ Turn me over, this side is well enough roasted.”

And yet, notwithstanding our more sober and respectful attitude towards religion, have we greater faith ?

The ugly side of light-heartedness is levity. Levity of decision, and above all, levity of action can have dire results. We all know the expression “ ill-timed levity,” but it is doubtful if levity in a statesman or a judge is ever well-timed. It was with a “ light heart ” that the French Minister, Emile Olivier, dragged France into the disastrous war of 1870.

The House of Commons, always ready to relieve boredom by laughter, greeted with uproarious hilarity the British Censor’s famous excision of Kipling’s poem :

“ The special correspondent wrote,
‘ The captains and the kings depart,’
The censor did not fail to note
 The error on the author’s part.
There chanced to be no kings about,
 So the official struck them out.”

On the other hand, the House never forgave the levity with which it was treated by a certain

member who, one year making an eloquent and amusing speech for the adjournment on Derby Day, made an equally convincing speech against it the next.

Different people have a different conception of humour. Speaking on the subject in general and of a certain individual in particular, I deprecated his lack of humour. "But you are wrong," said my friend; "on the contrary, he has a great sense of humour. I can assure you he will scream with laughter at anything!"

The attitude of the British in this blood-thirsty war has been criticised by the Germans in respect to the levity with which we are supposed to approach the situation. But this might be taken for a compliment if the outcome of German seriousness leads, for example, to the execution of a Miss Cavell.

At first sight the light-hearted way in which our brave soldiers go to the front might be mistaken for levity, even by people who are blessed with thinner craniums than the Germans possess. The spontaneous songs and gaiety of the "Tommies" are the admiration of our

Allies. The French, notwithstanding their proverbial light-heartedness, cannot emulate them.

Although we are inclined to think the French more superficial and frivolous than our more solid selves, we ought not to forget that they take their patriotism very seriously, nay more, they make an art of it, which, like all other arts, they carry to a great state of perfection.

It is certainly curious but true that, whereas in times of peace the English are accused of taking their pleasures sadly, in time of war they are accused of taking grim realities too lightly. Whether in the trenches or in the hospital, outward bound or on the home journey, the British soldier is always full of laughter and jollity. In his letters, abounding with jokes, he says very little of his King and Country . . . yet he dies for both. To the average Englishman facetiousness is often a refuge from a deep emotion. He chaffs in order to hide his hidden hurt.

A certain number of ladies, headed by Lady Limerick, have established a large buffet at London Bridge Station where thousands of

weary travelling soldiers and sailors get refreshment free as they pass through. Some are just out of hospital, others on leave, and some again are off to the front. To hear their songs, and to see them dancing—Sutherland Highlanders with their little kilts flying in the wind!—you would think they were off to a treat, not to the grim horrors of Flanders. A handsome young Highlander whom I had plied with coffee, buns, and cigarettes, and who had been twice wounded, showed me a watch and chain he had got at Loos. “Did you take it off a dead German?” I asked with emotion in my voice. With a merry twinkle in his eye the Scot replied: “Anyway he’s dead noo, and I inherited it!”

The other day at a Cinema, an unusual sound broke the silence and dumbness which the “movies” seem to communicate to the spectators. A loud ringing laugh turned all eyes in the direction from which it came, so long, so infectious was it, that the whole audience joined in. And then it was seen that this gay laughter came from a wounded soldier who had lost both his legs! Was not this light-heartedness almost sublime?

Forms of Excitement

THIS is a subject which I feel may lead me far—though I hope not astray!—for it opens unlimited vistas, and wherever I end it cannot be the last word. But what impresses me most at this moment is inevitably the forms of excitement that this war is calling forth.

It may be said that excitement is both to be deprecated and encouraged, for there is no doubt it has a dual effect. It gives ardour and strength and at the same time is exhausting. It is a kind of mental alcohol. We talk of being “drunk with excitement,” yet under its effect people hardly feel pain or fatigue and often are stirred to the performance of great deeds. We say to children “Don’t get excited,” and to be called an excitable person is a reproach. But this is all changed when a nation is at war. We glory in excitement, realising that it may be most

valuable. Practically we say at such a time, "Do get excited." "Do," in fact, "see to it that your blood runs swiftly in your veins. How can you remain calm? Abandon lethargy, apathy, and be excited about the tremendous struggle in which your country is engaged."

Can there be greater evidence of the value of excitement in war than Sir John French's dispatch some time ago in reference to Neuve Chapelle? According to him, this advance along the British lines had another object besides a strategic one. The excitement of the offensive was needed after a long winter in the trenches. But excitement, though inspiring, may sometimes be very dangerous to the judgment, therefore in war it is safer for those who are *led* to indulge in it than for those who *lead*.

The endurance shown on long route-marches by Kitchener's New Army, largely drawn, as it is, from the class hitherto engaged in sedentary occupations and often quite unaccustomed to outdoor exercise, is undoubtedly due, in part, to excitement—the excitement of novelty, of the collective feeling of comradeship, of pride in

serving the country. There has recently been a cry for bands for the army. Why—if not because it is realised that music is exciting ? What can be more inspiring than to march to the skirl of the pipes ? At Ypres the other day, a battalion which had been in the reserve trenches for seven days was marching out to its new billets. An officer described how weary and footsore they were, stumbling along in the dark over cobblestones—their heavy packs on their shoulders, and many miles before them—when suddenly from nowhere there was a burst of music ! A brass band struck up. At once all was excitement and interest. Backs straightened, heads went up, loads were forgotten, and they were played from a state of suspended animation into buoyant activity.

Would Nebuchadnezzar have succeeded in making the people fall down and worship the golden image that he had set up without the excitement of sound—of “the cornet, flute, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music ” ?

Reversing the argument, we might say how much music owes to excitement ! Think of the

physical discomforts of a Wagnerian "first night" as given in London. Evening dress in broad daylight, people sitting solemnly from four o'clock till midnight with only a hasty sandwich between the acts to support them! Even the *kultured* ones of Munich leave their seats at least every hour to stretch their *kolossal* limbs under the trees, and require innumerable tankards of beer and enormous sandwiches to brace them to endure the love passages of "Tristan."

A popular form of excitement at this moment is the rushing off to the active zone in defiance of torpedoes and shells. A friend of mine, who has been doing some splendid work in the hospitals out there, returned to England a few days ago. With difficulty I got her to relate her experiences, which were terrible. "I will tell you why I hesitated," she said. "The first night I arrived I met a lot of people at dinner who persuaded me to give an account of all I had seen and done. 'Oh, I wish I had been there,' one of the ladies exclaimed. 'It must have been very exciting—and taking it all round, you must have had a

very good time.' I was so incensed at this remark," said my friend, "that I couldn't help bursting out with—' Yesterday, when I left the hospital at Furnes, I went to take a last look at a little boy three years old who had had both his legs shattered by a shell, and then I turned to a man, who was lying in the next bed, who had had half his face blown away and at that moment was trying to be sick ! Perhaps you call that having a good time ! ' "

We all know the miracles that excitement can produce. At Antwerp, one night during the bombardment, over a hundred wounded and crippled soldiers, some of them who had seemed incapable of movement, struggled out of their beds to take refuge in a cellar where they remained the night tended by four nurses, my friend being one of them. Over twenty died, the excitement of fear giving those who survived fictitious strength.

There is certainly one form of excitement that is not attractive, to say the least of it, and that is the desire to be the first to carry evil tidings. The moment some people hear any bad news, apart

from informing everyone within ear-shot, they must needs rush to the telephone and impart it to someone—anyone—at a distance.

If it is true that lack of excitement, both in ideal and in fact, makes people achieve little in humdrum civil occupations, it is also true that many people depend on excitement to carry them through whatever they may be doing, and end by not being able to accomplish anything without it. For instance, actors who depend on excitement as a stimulus play their parts well only by accident and are indeed but amateurs. The best actors do not depend on it. The so-called "excitement of the footlights" is unknown to them. On the other hand, the musical artist or the speaker who feels no excitement and is perfectly calm and confident before the public is not likely to thrill them.

Excitement in love has been said to be nature's trap to ensure the continuance of the race. Certainly, many who in cold blood would shrink from marriage rush into it wildly under the influence of love. Treading on air, they forget for the time being the very earthy earth

under their feet to which sooner or later they must return.

The successful, who have arrived at the summit of their ambition, often take it calmly and, perhaps, with just a shade of disappointment at feeling so little elated. Is it because they have discounted it all and the excitement is over? The getting there was the thrilling part, not the realisation.

The most thrilling, and also perhaps the most worthy, form of excitement is that which comes from within—created in the soul of man, and not by any exterior agency. Such excitement is known by all who do good work, who see it grow out of their labour and their inspiration.



KU-357-224

